

Post 11/9/67

A Communication

I SHOULD like to comment on the article by Mr. Henry Fairlie of the London Sunday Telegraph, which appeared in The Washington Post of Jan. 15 regarding the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and its new Institute of Politics. I do so not because I consider it worthwhile as a general rule to correct irresponsible and inaccurate news stories, but because this one seems to me to reflect a complete lack of understanding of American universities and American politics.

Mr. Fairlie, while he is kind enough to say that he is not charging anyone with being "openly corrupt" or "openly venal," writes that the Kennedy Library Corporation (the organization raising funds for the memorial to President Kennedy) "decided to move in—there is no other phrase—on Harvard. It decided to rename the Graduate School of Administration, and attach to it a quite new body, the Institute of Politics."

He then goes on to say that "I am probably the only member of the general public who has seen the letter in which the Kennedy Library Corporation laid down its terms to the Harvard Corporation, which is the governing body of Harvard College." Incidentally, I hope you do not pay Mr. Fairlie a special bonus for this sensational revelation: the letter in question has been on public record at the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts for almost four months, and thus available to every reporter in Boston.

Mr. Fairlie charges that the Kennedy Library "moved in" on Harvard with the purpose of setting up, within the new Institute of Politics, a recruiting college for the Kennedy political faction, a sort of stockpile of staff talent, looking ahead to a new Kennedy in the White House.

THERE ARE several things wrong with Mr. Fairlie's thesis, as I could have told him if he had bothered to talk to me.

The first is that the initia-

tive with respect to the naming of the School for President Kennedy, and the establishment within it of the Institute of Politics, came not from the Kennedy Library Corporation but from President Pusey, of Harvard, acting on behalf of the Harvard Corporation. President Pusey first proposed both of these moves. I do not know whether the idea of naming the School for President Kennedy had ever occurred to any member of the Kennedy family or the Kennedy Library Corporation, but certainly President Pusey first suggested it to them, and not vice versa. It is, I admit, unusual for Harvard to name a school for an individual, but then it is unusual to have a Harvard graduate assassinated while serving as President of the United States.

At the time in 1964 when the Kennedy Library Corporation was laying plans for the creation of an Institute of Politics as a separate and independent entity, President Pusey proposed that such an Institute could have a more secure and permanent future, with a more certain guarantee of independence from control by any political party or faction, if it were endowed and

established as a part of Harvard. If Mr. Fairlie's comments on the power of money mean only that he regrets that it takes money to support professors, and an endowment to support them on terms that make them independent of the donors, he is absolutely right. The endowment of the Institute, at any rate, is and will continue to be a part of the endowment funds of the University, under the control of the University Corporation, as is any other permanent endowment given for a particular purpose.

Mr. Fairlie reports that the Ford Foundation made a contribution of \$2.5 million (it was actually \$2 million) for the endowment of

the Institute of Politics, and then asks "Who is head of the Ford Foundation? Why, of course, none other than Mr. McGeorge Bundy, formerly special assistant to both President Kennedy and President Johnson." I can only suppose that Mr. Fairlie did not know that Mr. Henry T. Heald was president of the Ford Foundation and Mr. Bundy was still on the White House staff when the grant in question was made.

Mr. Fairlie says that the advisory committee to the Institute of Politics is the "formal sanction which underlies the informal but continuing interest which the Kennedy family takes in running the Institute." He asks why this unusual arrangement should exist, if it were not to be used for Kennedy family control. This advisory committee is indeed unusual, I believe, in the distinction of its membership, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Averell Harriman. But as an institution it is hardly the unique feature that he makes out; each of 41 of the faculties and departments of Harvard has a Visiting Committee, and others (like the Institute of Politics) have less formal advisory committees. None of them is given authority or power. The governing authority of the School and the Institute, under the Harvard Corporation, is the faculty of the school.

AS A MATTER of fact, no member of the Kennedy family has made any suggestion to me or to the Director of the Institute of Politics with respect to any appointment, or with respect to any program decision, either before or since the Institute was established formally. And the idea that this particular advisory committee (which includes Mr. Otis Chandler, publisher of the Los Angeles Times and Mrs. Philip L. Graham, president of The Washington Post) would have been chosen, or would let itself be used, as either the tool or the cover

for such a plot seems to me rather unlikely.

Mr. Fairlie singles out three Harvard professors, all members of the Institute, as evidence of the way in which it is stockpiling Kennedy talent. Adam Yarmolinsky was brought to Harvard by the Faculty of Law, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan by the Faculty of Education; the Institute managed to persuade both to give it some of their time and interest over and above their regular responsibilities. Professor Neustadt cer-

tainly came to Harvard to be Director of the Institute of Politics, but he was not made a professor by the Institute, which has no power to appoint a professor; such appointments can be recommended to the President of Harvard only by the teaching faculties, and Mr. Neustadt was recommended by two—by the Department of Government of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and by the Faculty of Public Administration. If one wished to set up a stockpile, there would be simpler ways to manage it.

Mr. Fairlie's article is careful in what it omits. It reports the names of those in the Institute of Politics who worked with President Kennedy. It does not note that Professor Areeda, a member of the Institute, was on President Eisenhower's White House staff, or that Professor Kistiakowsky, a Faculty Associate of the Institute, was Science Advisor to President Eisenhower—both in more immediate and personal relationships to President Eisenhower than any member of the Institute had with President Kennedy. Perhaps, unless Mr. Fairlie classes me in the group which he says is too elderly to be invited back to Washington, he might have noted that I came to be Dean of the school after service as an assistant (during 1948 and 1949) to former President Herbert Hoover, and as a member of President Eisenhower's Advisory Committee on Government Organization.

I AM RATHER glad that President Johnson, like President Kennedy, has not considered such earlier

service under Republicans a disqualification for occasional assignments in the Executive Office of the President, any more than Republicans disqualified me for having worked in that office under Roosevelt and Truman. Most of the members of the Institute—including Professors Neustadt, Moynihan, and Yarmolinsky, all of whom Mr. Fairlie singled out as Kennedy conspirators, as well as I myself, continue to serve the Johnson Administration in various consulting and advisory capacities, and are happy to do so.

It is this point about American universities and American politics that Mr. Fairlie seems to miss completely. The Graduate School of Public Administration was not, in his sense of the word, a "chaste" institution before its name was changed. Mr. Fairlie's ideal of academic purity seems to be that a scholar must never dirty his hands with the data of practical experience, a notion that is as dangerous in the social as the natural sciences. When I was appointed Dean of the School, I found that most of the members of the School's faculty were men who had seen Government service at one time or another, including both of my predecessors as Dean, John H. Williams and Edward S. Mason. Most were and are willing to continue, part-time or occasionally full-time, in Government service. Some prefer one party and some another, but most are willing to work under either if given a chance to make good use of their knowledge and talents in programs in which they are interested.

And they all obviously know enough about American politics to know that the United States has no shadow cabinet, and that the idea of trying to stockpile in a university the nucleus of a staff for any particular candidate, in some future election would be a waste of money and effort.

Harvard is, of course, not proposing to do anything so absurd. Nor is it, however, likely to conform to Mr. Fairlie's idea that scholarly quality requires complete detachment from practical

affairs. The University will, of course, continue to put first priority on the scholarly advancement of knowledge, and on the teaching of the basic disciplines. But in its professional schools, including the School of Government, it will surely continue to work toward the use of basic knowledge for applied purposes. Since John Fitzgerald Kennedy exemplified better than any American political leader in recent years the determination to bring more closely together the worlds of intellect and of politics, it seems to me altogether appropriate that the School of Government at Harvard memorialize his name. Universities must recognize their responsibility to help raise the quality of the public service. Mr. Fairlie will never understand American universities if he starts with the assumption of a complete conflict between the study and the practice of government, any more than he can understand American politics if he assumes an ideological split between parties and a clear separation between the functions of the career official and the politician.

It is obviously hard to get accurate and fair reports about the universities and political systems of another country. If I have any compulsive feelings on this problem, they may come from some of my own experience. As the Oxford correspondent for the Associated Press in the early 1930s, I saw my story of the famous Oxford Oath distorted before it reached the American public by various intervening copy desks, which insisted on striking out its most significant information. This was my report that the margin of the vote in the Oxford Union against fighting for "King and Country" had been supplied by a number of Irishmen, Indians, and Americans, none of whom was interested in defending the King. It was rather dangerous then to mislead the American public with respect to the attitude of British students in British universities. It is doubtless less important now to give the British reading public a fair picture of the nature of the American universities and their relation to politics and Government. But since

trans-Atlantic communication on these issues, in both the academic and political worlds, is fairly intimate, it seems to me of some importance to set straight Mr. Fairlie's effort to make a sensational expose out of information that Harvard has repeatedly been announcing to the public over the past two years.

DON K. PRICE

*Dean
John Fitzgerald Kennedy
School of Government
Harvard University*